

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 CAB-02 DOTE-00

FAA-00 ISO-00 /089 W

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P R 260930Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6444

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11509

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: EAL UNION MEMBERS CLASH WITH SECURITY FORCES

1. THERE FOLLOWS PRELIMINARY REPORT BASED ON INFORMATION REACHING EMBASSY, OF CLASH BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES UNION MEMBERS AND ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES AT ADDIS ABABA BOLE AIRPORT EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 25 WHICH LEFT FOUR PEOPLE DEAD AND 29 WOUNDED ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL STATEMENTS. AIRPORT NOW CLOSED.

2. AT APPROXIMATELY 1715 HOURS LOCAL SEPT. 25, ETHIOPIAN SECURITY
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FORCES APPEARED AT ADDIS ABABA BOLE AIRPORT TO APPREHEND OFFICERS OF

EAL'S EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION. THESE OFFICERS WERE DISTRIBUTION A
CONFEDERATION ETHIOPIAN LABOR UNIONS (CELU) DOCUMENT.
THIS DOCUMENT, WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN, REPORTEDLY CON-
TAINS RESOLUTIONS FORMULATED BY CELU'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH HAS BEEN

SITTING IN ADDIS ABABA FOR THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS. THEY ARE SAID
TO BE EXTREMELY FAR-REACHING AND REPORTEDLY INCLUDE INTER ALIA THE
DEMAND FOR THE IMMEDIATE RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN ETHIOPIA.
AS UNION MEMBERS BECAME AWARE OF THE ACTION OF ETHIOPIAN SECURITY
FORCES, THEY ORGANIZED TO PROTEST AND RESIST THESE ARRESTS:
EMPLOYEES WALKED OFF THEIR JOBS; THERE WERE SCUFFLES AND SHOUTS,
FIST FIGHTS GREW IN SCOPE AND AT APPROXIMATELY 1920 HOURS THERE
WAS A FIRST SPATE OF FIRING. BY APPROXIMATELY 1930 HOURS SEVERAL
HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE STILL MILLING IN THE TERMINAL AREA AND ETHIOPIAN
MILITARY AND POLICE WERE PRESENT IN SOME FORCE. AT 2030 HOURS
AMBULANCES WERE STILL REMOVING THE DEAD AND THE WOUNDED. WE
UNDERSTAND THAT MILITARY SWEEP OPERATIONS WERE BEING CONDUCTED
AROUND THE AREA AND BY 2115 THERE WAS A FURTHER FIRING EPISODE IN
WHICH AT LEAST FOUR HEAVIER EXPLOSIONS -- POSSIBLY GRENADES OR A
CREW-SERVED WEAPON -- WERE NOTED. THE BOLE AIRPORT ROAD THEREAFTER
CARRIED HEAVY MILITARY TRAFFIC AND TRUCKLOADS OF CIVILIANS
(POSSIBLY IN EXCESS OF ONE THOUSAND) BEING EXCORTEED BY MACHINEGUN-
MOUNTING JEEPS AND TROOPS INTO TOWN, APPARENTLY TO 4TH DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS WHERE MANY ARE REPORTEDLY STILL BEING DETAINED.

3. MORNING SEPTEMBER 25 ALL EMPLOYEES REACHING BOLE AIRPORT TO
REPORT TO WORK APPEARED TO BE BEING HELD IN PARKING LOTS IN FRONT
OF MAIN TERMINAL BUILDING. AT 1000 HOURS LOCAL THE CROWD NUMBERED
APPROXIMATELY 400 TO 500 AND THERE ARE ROAD BLOCKS PREVENTING ACCESS
TO THE AREA BY UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL. ALTHOUGH THE CIVIL
AVIATION ADMINISTRATION IS FUNCTIONING, THERE ARE NO RPT NO
GROUND SERVICES AT THE AIRPORT AND INCOMING FLIGHTS BY OTHER
CARRIERS ARE BEING DIVERTED OUT OF COUNTRY. RADIO ETHIOPIA AN RADIO
VOICE OF THE GOSPEL (RVOG) HAVE CARRIED BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT STATING SI
MPLY
THAT SECURITY FORCES WERE COMPELLED TO OPEN FIRE WHEN UNNAMED PERSONS
RESISTED THE ARREST OF INDIVIDUALS ATTEMPTING TO DISTRIBUTE UN-
AUTHORIZED LEAFLETS. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, AS MENTIONED ABOVE, ADMITS TO
FOUR DEAD AND 29 WOUNDED. THE REST OF ADDIS, HOWEVER, HAS REMAINED
CALM.

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4. COMMENT: IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO ASSESS THE RAMIFICATIONS OF
THIS AFFAIR. AS THIS IS BEING DRAFTED, WE HEAR THAT THE CROWD AT
THE AIRPORT IS MELTING AWAY AS EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO
RETURN TO THEIR JOBS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THEY WILL
WORK, HOW QUICKLY THE AIRPORT CAN RESUME OPERATIONS AND WHETHER
THE UNIONS ARE PREPARED TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION IN THE FACE OF THIS
RUTHLESS GOVERNMENT USE OF FORCE. HOWEVER THIS MAY BE, ORGANIZED

LABOR BOUND TO BE FURTHER EMBITTERED BY THESE DIRG ACTIONS.
HUMMEL

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